



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# **REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FARM ECONOMIC INVESTIGATIONAL WORK, THE AMERICAN FARM ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION.**

THEODORE MACKLIN,  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN, MADISON.

SUBJECT OF NATION-WIDE INTEREST.

Farmers and the general public throughout the country are deeply interested in finding answers to their varied economic questions and problems. All of the farmers' national organizations, including the Farm Bureau, are insistent in the demand for facts even to the point of organizing research agencies of their own to assemble and analyze statistical and other pertinent facts. For years agricultural leadership neglected to promote work along this line in spite of its great need. The present situation as reported from 20 states is, that such farm economic facts as have been made available by investigations are utterly inadequate either to meet public demands or appreciably to aid those who must act in trying to stimulate improvement.

A very considerable part of the public unrest at the present time is occasioned by the lack of understanding of the economic forces which underlie the production, marketing and consumption of farm products. Facts which warrant the making of correct economic conclusions and the dissemination of this sort of information do not become available except through careful and thorough investigation, research, and analysis. For these two reasons, if for no others, farm economic investigation is an exceedingly important field of scientific effort. Unfortunately it is a line of work which scarcely has been touched. Constant and rapidly increasing demand is being made by farmers and consumers for facts which are likely to be obtained through no other means than trained investigators of farm economic problems. Your committee, charged with reporting on this subject, therefore has undertaken a survey of the various State Institutions of the country which are most likely to be responsible for promoting this line of effort.

By means of a short, concise, though comprehensive questionnaire,

facts have been gathered from 20 institutions<sup>1</sup> in as many states all of which have some kind of farm economic investigation under way. From 5 states<sup>1</sup> word was received that no work along this line is conducted not because it is not appreciated but because funds are not available. Reports were received from 4 institutions too late to be used, and at least 2 institutions which are developing farm economic investigations either failed or declined to contribute information requested, while the remaining states made no response whatsoever. Presumably this failure to respond is due to a lack of interest in this important field of scientific inquiry. The report of your committee is therefore confined to conclusions based on facts contributed by farm economic workers in 20 states.

#### PRESENT LIMITATIONS TO ADEQUATE INVESTIGATION.

Farm economic investigators of 20 states reported that this line of work was no more than just started and emphasized that lack of funds and of workers was responsible for the present state of under-development. Tracing the lack of trained men and of funds to their source leads to the fact that agricultural leaders have generally overlooked the business side of farming in their eagerness to promote increased production. More recently, of those who have apportioned funds for this kind of investigation, many apparently failed to realize the time and expense required to collect, analyze and present thorough and helpful economic information. As a result funds of insignificant amount have been set apart for the employment of farm economic investigators and for the support of their activities. Until recent years, therefore, men have not found it worth while to prepare for a field of work in which leaders decreed by oversight that there was no career. At present even where investigators are employed the practise is far too common of overcrowding their program with teaching and other duties which leave little time and energy for application to their investigational projects. These in another form however are evidences of the shortage of adequate funds to develop the creative side of farm economics.

#### INADEQUACY OF FUNDS FOR RESULTS DESIRED.

Probably few realize the small expenditure which is being made for this kind of work even by institutions which lead in this line. The facts in Table I indicate the averages and extremes in the

<sup>1</sup> See list of states at end of report.

amount of funds devoted to farm economic investigations during the year 1919 to 1920, as reported.

TABLE I. *Funds for farm economic investigations at 16 institutions,<sup>2</sup> 1919-1920.*

Type of Expenditure.	Average Expenditure.	Range in Size of Fund for Each Item.	
		Highest.	Lowest.
Salaries . . . . .	\$3,522	\$7,412	\$ 900
Expenses . . . . .	2,327	5,650	150
Total . . . . .	5,849	11,260	1,400

It should be emphasized that in most cases salaries represent funds which are not regularly thought of as being devoted to research since they are paid from teaching funds. It is obvious from these figures that little can be accomplished in the way of comprehensive investigation to satisfy the need for improvement in the public's knowledge of farm economic problems until more nearly adequate funds are provided.

For the year 1920-21 only 11 institutions<sup>4</sup> provided facts. These are shown in Table II. To some extent these indicate increased appropriations. That the usual institution provides a fund so small that not to exceed the equivalent services of two capable men can be devoted to farm economics investigation would certainly justify the conclusion that most states are not providing enough funds to secure results.

TABLE II.—*Funds for farm economic investigations at 11 institutions,<sup>3</sup> 1920-1921.*

Type of Expenditure.	Average Expenditure.	Range in Size of Funds for Each Item.	
		Highest.	Lowest.
Salaries . . . . .	\$4,200	\$9,010	\$ 600
Expenses . . . . .	3,400	8,975	270
Total . . . . .	7,600	17,985	1,400

It is interesting to note that six of the leading institutions reporting their expenditures, appropriated more generously in 1920-1921 than they had for 1919-20. A comparison of their allotments for these two years is shown in Table III. An increase of one third

<sup>2</sup> See end of report for names of institutions.

<sup>3</sup> See end of report for names of institutions.

seems to be a hopeful sign though this amount was insufficient appreciably to extend investigational projects.

TABLE III.—*Comparative funds at six institutions<sup>5</sup> for two years, 1919-1920.*

Year.	Amount for Salaries.	Amount for Expenses.	Total Fund.
1919-20.....	\$4,202	\$2,483	\$6,685
1920-21.....	5,818	3,993	9,811

### OUTSTANDING FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS.

Serious consideration of the information presented and of the further fact that the public, including farmers and consumers, demand and require more adequate facts which they propose to secure by enlarging the powers and increasing the funds of the several state marketing divisions must impress the reader with the shortcoming of experiment stations so far as the business side of farming is concerned. Probably half of the states are not promoting any farm economic investigational work whatsoever, while most of the others are supporting it—insufficiently and half-heartedly. It appears to your committee that if the numerous practical phases of farm economic interest suggested by last year's committee (reported in JOURNAL OF FARM ECONOMICS, Volume 2, No. 2, pp. 115 to 118) are to be investigated soon enough and with sufficient speed to help farmers, consumers and the public, that this association should bestir itself to promote a more general interest and a more generous support of its workers and especially of their programs and efforts.

20 States Reporting data in time for use.		4 States Reporting data too late for use in report.	5 States Reporting data for two consecutive years. (Includes 6 institutions.)
California <sup>a</sup>	Nebraska <sup>a</sup>	Illinois	Iowa
Connecticut <sup>7</sup>	North Carolina <sup>7</sup>	Massachusetts	Kansas
Georgia <sup>a</sup>	North Dakota <sup>7</sup>	Oregon	Kentucky
Idaho <sup>7</sup>	Ohio <sup>a</sup>	Pennsylvania	Michigan
Indiana <sup>a</sup>	South Carolina <sup>a</sup>		Wisconsin
Iowa <sup>a,7</sup>	Tennessee <sup>7</sup>		
Kansas <sup>a,7</sup>	Utah <sup>a</sup>		
Kentucky <sup>a,7</sup>	Washington <sup>a</sup>		
Michigan <sup>a,7</sup>	West Virginia <sup>a</sup>		
Missouri <sup>a</sup>	Wisconsin <sup>a,7</sup>		

<sup>5</sup> See end of report for names.

<sup>6</sup> Indicates states whose data are tabulated in Table I.

<sup>7</sup> Indicates states whose data are tabulated in Table II.